FREDD STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

SHELTON STATE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A Musical Journey through the Life of

Zelpha Wells

Friday, February 28th

6:30 p.m.

C. A. Fredd Cafetorium

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

Prelude

Welcome
Byron Abston, Faculty Assistant to the President

Invocation
Jean Mack

A Musical Journey through The Life of Zelpha Wells Begins

Narrator
Philip Coleman

First Presbyterian Church Choral Group
John Orr - Director
To God be the Glory

The Central High School West Campus Choir
Jocqueline Richardson - Director
I'm Gonna Sing 'Til The Spirit Moves in My Heart
Moses Hogan
It Don't Mean A Thing
Duke Ellington

Adrian Bailey - Piano Soloist
Sonatina

Shelton State Jazz Ensemble Combo
All of Me
Seymour Simons and Gerald Marks
Lush Life
Billy Strayhorn

PROCLAMATION
Honorable Alvin P. Dupont, Mayor

PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS
Zelpha Wells Tribute Committee

REMARKS
Pam Anderson Cole, Faculty Assistant to the President

APPRECIATION
Cordell Wynn Ph.D.
Chairman of Fredd State Jubilee Committee

Reception to Follow

Zelpha Storey Wells was born the only child of Edmond and Malinda Storey. By age five, Wells could play any song she heard; consequently, her parents arranged for her to take piano lessons. Edmond Storey was a barber who worked part-time as a sexton for the First Presbyterian Church. While accompanying her father to the church, Wells had an opportunity to play the pianos located in the Sunday school rooms of First Presbyterian. Recognizing the child's talent, the church organist, Priscilla Anne Keeler, volunteered to teach Wells how to play the organ. For three years, Ms. Keeler provided the instruction, books, and supplies for Wells' lessons.

Because of Ms. Keeler, Wells was inspired to help others who might otherwise miss out on the opportunity to play the piano because they could not afford the lessons. As a result she began teaching classes in the Crescent East Housing Project with 15 students. Eventually, Wells was giving her free, 30-minute lessons to over 500 students in the city and county schools.

In 1976 she formed the Cultural Development Corporation, which allowed her to apply for grants that could enrich the cultural life of Tuscaloosa's economically deprived children through free piano lessons. In 1988 Moses and Charlotte Swaim donated a house to the Cultural Development Corporation to house classes, recitals and other programs. The Wells-Swaim Cultural Center opened on Paul Bryant Drive in 1995.

Wells attended Talladega College, earning a B.A. degree in piano and music education with a minor in organ. She also studied at Columbia University, Fisk University, Peabody College, and Vanderbilt University.

Wells taught music for over 40 years and played jazz in trios, as well as solo. The Zelpha Wells Trio has included many of Alabama's great jazz musicians, including John Bishop, Tippy Armstrong, and Jerome Hopkins. In 1986 she was inducted into the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame.

Organizations she has been affiliated with during the years include the city and county schools, Stillman College, Shelton State, the City of Tuscaloosa, Community Services of West Alabama, Indian Rivers, Alabama State Council on the Arts, and various clubs, churches and organizations. Wells is the mother of two daughters.